

# 36 Years Ago at MSC

## John Glenn orbits Earth three times

Mercury Atlas 6 flight proves man is able to perform tasks during weightlessness

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Astronaut John Glenn, Jr., yesterday became the first American to orbit the Earth. The spaceflight, often postponed because of weather and technical difficulties, finally became a reality after a sudden change in weather and Glenn's name is certain to go down into history alongside the names of Astronaut Alan B. Shepard and Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom, who completed sub-orbital space flights last year. The flight started at 9:47 a.m. EST and was concluded at 2:43 p.m. EST when he splashed down in the Atlantic Ocean. The Friendship 7 with its now famous astronaut pilot was picked up by the USS Noa at 3:01 p.m. and set on the destroyer's deck at 3:04 p.m. Glenn reported by radio to the Noa's crew, "My condition is excellent."

The near perfect weather and the outstanding performance of the spacecraft and launch vehicle systems seemed a fitting reward for the remarkable patience with which Glenn had shrugged off what seemed to be endless delays to others. Both Glenn and his back-up pilot, M. Scott Carpenter, have repeatedly stated that the delays would only serve to increase the sharpness of the crew and Glenn's performance during the flight seemed to give credence to this view.

The flight took an elapsed time of slightly more than four hours and 56 minutes, during which time John Glenn had traveled more than 80,000 miles. Following his pickup by the Noa the side hatch of the Mercury spacecraft was blown and Glenn performed a side egress.

Glenn was in voice contact with fellow astronauts at Mercury tracking stations during his history making flight, and in typical Glenn fashion many of the remarks were of a light nature.

In addition to reporting on his physical condition and the spacecraft's systems, he continually gave other impressions as to the view, etc. Shortly after lift-off Glenn said that the "view was tremendous." When passing over the coastline of Australia on the first of his three trips around the Earth, he was conversing with Astronaut Gordon Cooper and he saw lights to the south. When Cooper informed him that the lights were turned on as a salute by the citizens of Perth, he said, "the lights show very well and thank everybody for turning them on."

On his last orbit Glenn requested Cooper to send a message to the Commandant of Marines, General D.M. Shoup, notifying him that he had attained his necessary four hours of flight time and was requesting flight pay.

After his re-entry, at which time the spacecraft attained a temperature of about 3,000 degrees and the cabin temperature was in excess of 130 degrees, when queried about his condition, Glenn said he felt fine and speaking of the experience of re-entry said, "boy, that was a real fireball."

National radio and television coverage of the event started at 6:30 a.m. and lasted far past the time of recovery. The media not only covered the activities at Cape Canaveral but also those at the Glenn home in Arlington, Va., at the hometown of his parents, New Concord, Ohio, at the White House in Washington, and



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A camera aboard the "Friendship 7" Mercury spacecraft photographs Astronaut John H. Glenn Jr. during the Mercury-Atlas 6 space flight.

in the recovery area.

Following the completion of the flight and the recovery President Kennedy appeared on camera and spoke briefly concerning the success of the mission. He said in part, "I know I express the great happiness and thanksgiving of all of us on the completion of Colonel Glenn's trip. I also want to thank all of those who participated at Cape Canaveral who faced many disappointments and delays but kept their heads and made a judgment and today that judgment has been vindicated. Some time ago, I stated that all men should serve their country. Today Colonel Glenn served his country."

At New Concord, Ohio, many activities were held to mark the biggest day in the life of the town's hero. At T minus 15 minutes the sirens in the town were sounded to give the citizens notice to gather at Muskingum College Auditorium to view the launch.

Following the flight, Glenn's moth-

er said that most tense moment for her and Mr. Glenn were those moments just after the launch and before the successful orbit was announced. She said that in a telephone conversation on Tuesday night John had told her that he had "packed his bag for a little trip."

At Arlington, where media representatives stood by all day, Glenn's wife said that this was the "most wonderful day for my family. We're all so proud of everyone on the Mercury team who made it such a success."

It was reported that one of the happiest men in the Mercury Control Center at the successful completion of the mission was Astronaut Donald K. "Deke" Slayton, who has been named to pilot the Mercury-Atlas 7 mission with Walter Schirra, Jr., as a back-up pilot and Gus Grissom as technical advisor.

More than 500 media representatives followed the Mercury spacecraft as it circled the Earth three times and kept the free world in constant con-

tact with the progress of the mission. It was further reported that Soviet Union factual reports were broadcast from time to time. One of the facilities at the Cape press site was a Voice of America van through which messages in many languages were transmitted to all parts of the world.

Glenn rose shortly after 2 a.m., breakfasted with steak, scrambled eggs, toast, orange juice, and coffee. Following his physical examination and the attachment of bio-sensors, he was suited at 4:30 a.m., the pressure check was completed at 4:38 a.m., he left the crew quarters and was transferred to Complex 14 in the Transfer Van, arrived at the launch pad at 5:59 a.m., and entered the spacecraft at 6:03 a.m. At that point no one could know that he would spend nine hours and 21 minutes in that spacecraft before emerging on the deck of the Noa. During the trip he traveled around the Earth at altitudes ranging from 100 to 160 statute miles.

## Gilruth Center News

**Hours:** The Gilruth Center is open from 6:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 6:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday, and 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday.

**Sign up policy:** All classes and athletic activities are on a first come, first served basis. Sign up in person at the Gilruth Center and show a yellow Gilruth or weight room badge. Classes tend to fill up two weeks in advance. Payment must be made in full, in exact change or by check, at the time of registration. No registration will be taken by telephone. For more information, call x30304.

**Gilruth badges:** Required for use of the Gilruth Center. Employees, spouses, eligible dependents, NASA retirees and spouses may apply for photo identification badges from 7:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Friday; and 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays. Cost is \$10. Dependents must be between 16 and 23 years old.

**Weight safety:** Required course for employees wishing to use the Gilruth weight room. The next classes are scheduled for at 8 p.m. March 12 and March 26 (must be on time to receive credit for class). Pre-registration is required. Cost is \$5. Annual weight room use fee is \$90. Additional family members are \$50.

**Exercise:** Low impact class meets from 5:15 p.m.- 6:15 p.m. Mondays & Wednesdays. Cost \$24 for eight weeks.

**Stamp Club:** Meets every 2nd and 4th Monday at 7:00 p.m. in Rm. 216.

**Akido:** Introduction to Aikido beginning classes start every month. Class meets Tuesday and Wednesday from 5:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. Instruction by 4th Degree Black Belt. Learn to defend yourself and get a great aerobic workout. Cost is \$35 per month.

**Step/bench aerobics:** Low impact cardiovascular workout, classes every Monday, Tuesday & Thursday from 5:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. Cost is \$32 for eight weeks- Kristen Taragzewski instructor. x36891

**Ballroom dance lessons:** Classes meet every Thursday from 7 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. for Beginner Advanced Classes and classes for Beginner-Intermediate and Intermediate are from 8:15 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Cost is \$60 per couple.

**Fitness Program:** Health Related Fitness Program includes medical examination screening, 12 week individually prescribed exercise program. Call Larry Wier at x30301 for more information.

**Country and western dance lessons:** Beginner class 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Mondays. Advanced class (must know basic steps to all dances) 8:30 p.m.-10 p.m. Cost is \$20 per couple.

**Defensive Driving Course:** Class is offered once a month at the Gilruth Center. Interested parties must pre-register. Cost \$25.

**Nutrition Intervention Program:** Would you like to learn more about the role diet and nutrition play in your health? Open to all NASA Civil servants, contractors and spouses, this 6 week program includes private consultation with the Dietitian, a lecture series and blood analysis to chart your progress. Contact: Tammie Shaw x32980.

**Gilruth Home Page:** Check out all activities at the Gilruth online at: <http://www4.jsc.nasa.gov/ah/exceaa/Gilruth/Gilruth.htm>

## Ticket Window

The following discount tickets are available for purchase in the Bldg. 11 Exchange Store from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday and in the Bldg. 3 Exchange Store from 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday - Friday. For more information call x35350 or x30990.

**Moody Gardens:** Tickets are \$9.75 for two of four events

**Space Center Houston:** Adults, \$10.25; children (4-11), \$7. JSC civil service employees free.

**Movie discounts:** General Cinema, \$5.50; AMC Theater, \$4.50; Sony Loew's Theater, \$5.

**Stamps:** Book of 20, \$6.40

**1998 Franklin Planners:** Replacement refill orders being taken now.

**Sweetwater Pecans:** Orders are being taken now; cost is \$5.75 per pound.

**Metro passes:** Tokens and value cards available.

**Book available:** *Suddenly Tomorrow Came: A History of Johnson Space Center.*

**Balloons:** Balloon bouquets for all occasions, prices vary.

## Roundup Deadlines

The Space News Roundup is published every other Friday. Story ideas should be submitted as far in advance as possible, but no later than two weeks prior to the date of publication.

The deadline for Dates & Data calendar items is three weeks prior to the date of publication.

Stories and ideas should be submitted to Editor Kelly Humphries in Bldg. 2, Rm. 180, or via e-mail to [kelly.o.humphries1@jsc.nasa.gov](mailto:kelly.o.humphries1@jsc.nasa.gov).

Retirees should submit change of address notices to the distribution group at Mail Code BT552 or call Ignacia Ramirez at 281-483-6161.